

A review of the CRBNM Program in Zambia

Prepared by D.M. Lewis

Introduction

Zambia's protected wildlife estate consists of 18 national parks and 35 surrounding buffer areas called game management areas, covering over 200,000 km² or approximately 33% of the total country. Managing wildlife resources over such a vast area by a single government authority has been prohibitively expensive and logistically impractical. As a result, enforcement of wildlife laws in past years has generally failed and many wildlife populations are now threatened from illegal marketing of game meat and conversion of wildlife habitat into farmland.

In response to these problems, the Zambian Government through its Zambia Wildlife Authority, designed and developed an alternative approach to conservation by transferring responsibilities and benefits of managing wildlife to rural communities living in game management areas. The premise of this approach is that the cost of conserving wildlife in these semi-protected areas will be greatly reduced if benefits are distributed fairly among all members in the community and if the benefits themselves provide sufficient incentives to protect this resource. After an initial pilot scheme, this approach became adopted as the national program for game management areas and was called the Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas, or ADMADE as its acronym.

As a result of 10 years of research conducted through this program, in 1999 major revisions were incorporated into the Wildlife Act of Zambia. Communities now have the legal right to manage and protect their wildlife resources and are guaranteed that financial benefits accrued from legal uses of wildlife will be returned to them. Another important development is the recent accreditation of the Zambia Wildlife Authority's training and research institute as the African College for Community-based Natural Resource Management (College for CBNRM). The College has been in existence as a community training center for 10 years, over which time it has demonstrated its critical role in improving communication and understanding of wildlife use among the key stakeholders in game management areas, namely the community, private sector and Government. No other college exists in Africa that focuses specifically on rural communities with the mission to build local capacity to manage natural resources responsibly and profitably, and to improve partnerships among the various stakeholders involved in this process.

Over 95% of the economic support for ADMADE is derived from fees collected from tourist uses of the resources, most especially safari hunting. Harvesting wildlife as a consumptive use is strongly entrenched in Zambian culture, but managing it sustainably is the hurdle to be straddled. The ADMADE program has struggled with this, but has also made many achievements in this area: 1) it established a certification process of safari operators for compliance to basic norms of ethical hunting practices; 2) developed a verifiable and low-cost approach to monitoring wildlife population trends; 3) trained

community leaders to use these data to set hunting quotas; and 4) instituted a credible and cost-effective use of locally employed village scouts to monitor all forms of licensed hunting and to police communal lands against all forms of illegal use).

ADMADE's growth and expansion over the past 10 years is attributed to a strong reliance on monitoring and evaluation results to help guide needed policy reforms to increase program success. As a result, ADMADE has undergone numerous transformations through a process dominated by the views and aspirations of the communities the program principally serves. In this regard, Government, which is the principal agency for administering the program, has been primarily a listener and a facilitator. The process has resulted in a historical transition of authority from central Government to rural-based community authorities, now referred to as Community Resource Boards. This devolution of authority was not without bottlenecks and difficulties. Old administrative systems had to change to provide greater autonomy and management capacity at the community level. Today, this process of devolution is far from over and many challenges remain that remain a potential barrier in allowing ADMADE to realize its full potential for conservation and rural development in Zambia.

There is in Zambia, however, a strong national consensus that CBNRM is the right way to manage wildlife and other natural resources outside national parks. Politicians are more frequently pressing for a larger share of the revenue benefits to be returned to community constituencies for their efforts in conserving and producing wildlife. Political and Government leaders are meeting with community leaders to review policies that may adversely affect resource benefits accruable to communities. National media is providing a transparent and educational forum for public debate on how to move the CBNRM process forward. Such examples illustrate how far Zambia has reached in just ten years in embracing communities as partners in conservation and not as adversaries, as was the case before. Still, there is just reason to be cautious about the full success ADMADE will achieve. Many areas of Zambia where CBNRM is needed, ADMADE has yet to penetrate. In other areas where it has been introduced, training support has been inadequate and communities lack sufficient skills and confidence to effectively implement ADMADE. And finally, numerous cases persist where the upper hand of Government interferes with the full economic returns of wildlife to its community producers. Yet, in those areas where community skills are properly taught and income earnings are returned in a timely way to support community needs, there is a growing body of evidence to support ADMADE's success in reversing downward declines in wildlife numbers by creating responsible and cost-effective partners in managing wildlife resources.

This paper provides a critical review of ADMADE by examining its critical features that promise a strong CBNRM programme for tomorrow while also presenting the most prominent challenges that represent potential barriers to this future. To assist the reader in understanding some of the dynamics and opportunities this programme offers, a set of graphical illustrations are provided as guidelines for many of the key points presented.

ADMADE is a community organization – Figure 1

A primary feature of ADMADE is the level of community organization it has reached that provides community members the opportunity to overcome many of the causes of rural poverty. The new Wildlife Act does this by bestowing legal rights to communities to democratically select leaders who are most qualified to address problems of poverty at a household-level and to become beneficiaries of the wildlife resources they help produce to support human needs. The ADMADE community organization requires decision-making to be participatory, such that no member of the community is excluded and that leaders elected to facilitate this approach function at levels within the community where they will be accountable to their electorate. The ADMADE experience has also shown that community organization requires a structured leadership that engages active participation by residents while providing them a framework for assessing their own efforts in sustaining development needs through improved management of natural resources. By opening up the process of decision-making and accountability of actions to all, the community as a whole becomes more unified in resolving problems that affect the welfare of the community. Equally important, traditional leadership is recognized as an integral and important part of African culture and is also fully involved to ensure this level of leadership maintains its traditional role to improve the overall performance by ADMADE. To help formalize this structure and ensure leaders elected by the community fully observe and use it, communities are expected to develop and ratify their own constitution for defining responsibilities and procedures in support of it.

What emerges from this structure is a system of local governance not seen before in Zambia for managing natural resources. It is giving rise to effective use of local manpower for the protection and monitoring of wildlife and other natural resources, referred to as village scouts. It is establishing village-based committees that meet regularly and convene public meetings to discuss topics that reinforce the link between conservation and development. It is creating leaders who are applying civic duties to a range of important functions of resource management and community development. For the first time, Government and private sector are beginning to regard communities as a strategic partner, and in so doing, are dramatically reducing the costs in delivering social benefits in rural areas and in maintaining wildlands as viable for tourism investments.

ADMADE requires cooperation among its partners, guided by well-defined agreements and a capacity to monitor compliance – Figure 2

There are a number of stakeholders involved and committed to ADMADE's success, among which the primary ones are the communities themselves through their legally instituted Community Resource Boards, Zambia Wildlife Authority and private sector groups. Others include relevant Government department, local NGOs, international NGOs and donor agencies. Effective communication among these stakeholders to allow greater political, technical and financial support for ADMADE is a critical feature to its success and future strength. To facilitate such communication, an ADMADE Directorate will soon be constituted among the programme's major stakeholders to provide a regular forum to review, assess and suggest solutions and ideas on ways

ADMADE can improve. Essential to this process of external, transparent review of the programme are two components. One is a well-prescribed set of obligations and benefits the principal beneficiary, the community, is bound to with its legal partner, the Zambia Wildlife Authority. These details are contained in an ADMADE Management Agreement, signed by the Chairman of the Community Resource Board and its Patron and by the Director General of ZAWA. Likewise, the same agreement should include those obligations and benefits required by ZAWA. It is this set of contractual relationships that the Directorate is primarily required to review and assess. The second component is a Technical Secretariat that monitors these agreements impartially and objectively to make comprehensive reports available to the Directorate. With such information and with a genuine desire on the part of the Directorate to maintain high standards of achievements for ADMADE, ZAWA as the legal agency responsible for its implementation can take corrective actions or interventions when problems arise.

ADMADE is a gradual process of community empowerment driven largely by local capacity - Figure 3

An interesting paradox in the ADMADE situation is that the communities considered vital for the protection of a resource regarded as so important economically for the country are relatively uneducated and unskilled in managing it. As ADMADE evolved, ZAWA learned that it was not just management skills that mattered, however. A whole range of skills were needed that could provide people with alternative options for using their resources and earning personal income without degrading their resources. Also evident was the lack of leadership and administrative skills in helping communities function as an organization of household stakeholders.

To help build ADMADE on a strong foundation of community skills, ZAWA developed its own training center. Over the past 10 years, it has evolved and developed into a fully accredited College for teaching community members the full range of CBNRM skills they need to effectively implement ADMADE. Known now as the African College for Community-based Natural Resource Management, the College has recognized the critical importance of linking CBNRM research to its development of curriculum and training methodology. This has made it possible to assess the results of its training, evaluate needs and test new techniques and methodologies. As standardization of skills and procedures became more clear, the College was then able to engage NGO partners to assist with the work in exporting these skills to other communities while maintaining overall leadership in advancing ADMADE skills development.

Today ZAWA has a college that offers 15 accredited courses with corresponding training manuals, a professional training staff with ties to a number of credible NGOs for additional technical support, and an outreach training approach that moves the classroom out into the community supported by staff at training outposts in different parts of the country. Today, over 600 students are matriculating through the College annually and communities are attaining impressive levels of sophistication and self-reliance in implementing ADMADE themselves.

ADMADE challenges are solvable once the problem is identified and participating partners are committed to solving them – Figures 4-8

ADMADE is analogous to a national business enterprise struggling to remain profitable and competitive but using the currency of rural development and biodiversity conservation as its primary measures of success. Like any business organization it must understand how to produce, market and reward its employees for good work. In the ADMADE scenario, competition comes from those who persist with destructive resource uses that may be illegal, those who impede or discourage freedom of participation in the ADMADE process, or those who use the land in ways that could lower ADMADE's capacity to generate income. Competition may also come from interest groups whose political persuasion may affect the policy environment in which ADMADE operates and thus influence its level of profits and proprietary rights by the resource producer. All of these threats represent in reality a business challenge. If ADMADE's products are fully appreciated by the full range of stakeholders who are expected to support and benefit from the program and if the challenges that face such products are well explained and understood, chances of over-coming them are greatly increased.

Much of ADMADE's history has been a story of over-coming threats and crises and at each step, the programme gains confidence and skills in how to use information and public relations to make ADMADE more competitive and successful. There are two key lessons derived from this experience. One is the need to build political constituency among a broad range of interest groups, most especially Government, to provide a stable, enabling environment for the programme to grow. The second is the critical importance of identifying the true causes of challenges or programme threats with objectivity and accurate information. The process is slow, can be painful, but the results will lead to success.

There are a number of challenges ADMADE faces today. From a business perspective, they represent exciting opportunities for growth if they can be overcome and deserve the full support by ZAWA and other supporting institutions in helping resolve them with solutions that all parties can support. Examples of the key challenges facing ADMADE today are illustrated in Figures 4-8 with a brief explanation below:

1. Community skills in leadership and planning are unevenly provided or poorly taught, giving rise to elected leaders who not accountable to their electorate. As a result, ADMADE benefits are not fairly distributed and household stakeholders may be unwilling to support ADMADE fully, causing the resource base to be compromised. Such leadership problems are often evidenced by uneven gender participation, conflicts with local Chiefs, or failure to uphold the community constitution.
2. Managing and supporting human numbers are constrained by arable land, growing population rates, poor food production practices, and inadequate service providers to deal with these problems. In the Zambian case, these problems are very real but not beyond reach of finding solutions. They do, however, represent

- the critical problems affecting the long-term viability of the resource base to sustain the level of benefits needed to maintain good conservation practices.
3. Providing full market value to the resource producer is not offered to the resource producer and instead the producer is heavily taxed. Revenue flows are seriously constrained by this situation, which is caused largely by other, non-critical shares going to other parties. The key challenge needed to resolve this problem is political commitment to full support the principal that no one will benefit from wildlife if communities are not motivated to produce the resource as a form of land use to compete with other land uses.
 4. Creating household income through legal, sustainable use of natural resources is limited by such constraints as access to markets and lack of skills needed to make people more employable or better able to generate personal income. Wildlife revenues if properly directed into household opportunities for diversifying income options could greatly assist in overcoming this problem. A major source of income for many households remain unregulated use of certain resources that adversely affects ADMADE benefits to the community as a whole.

ADMADE results are often hard-learned lessons that programme stakeholders need to fully appreciate and quickly export into other CBNRM areas – Figures 9-13

Major CBNRM advancements in the ADMADE programme normally take considerable time and effort. In the past these advancements have tended to happen in particular areas where the particular variables were favorable to allow new, improved approaches to be developed and tested. When positive results are documented and the causal basis is substantiated, lessons that flow out of this experience need to be well presented to programme stakeholders. This enables improved CBNRM approaches to be more quickly supported in other areas where they can be further tested. Ultimately, such efforts help institutionalize these approaches into policy reform for overall programme strengthening. Communication of results also help participating partners such as volunteer agencies, NGO and donor agencies to facilitate ZAWA's efforts in exporting these lessons into new areas more quickly.

In the past year ADMADE has contributed to improved understanding of how to implement the program with greater chances of programme success with a number of important achievements. These are presented in Figures 9-13 and are summarized below:

1. Improved community organization and participation for responding to management needs is achievable through a new design of information flow and process of decision-making that requires greater levels of participation at the village level. This structure is giving rise to a much improved capacity to respond to local resource management problems at relatively low costs. Democratic leadership facilitates the selection of the most qualified people, who are better able to acquire technical knowledge and be sufficiently motivated to apply these skills for advanced management responsibilities, such as quota setting, budgeting management plans, etc.

2. Better informed and more actively involved households through the use of such techniques as PRA and outreach training within the community is helping to maintain higher standards of leadership among those elected to perform critical ADMADE tasks. Frequent public meetings that are well structured with agenda topics that are important for maintaining ADMADE success is a critical tool for broadening household involvement.
3. Communities can only grow more wildlife as a communal cash crop if households produce enough food and personal income. Where this lesson has been applied, ADMADE has document significant declines in wildlife snaring and reductions in land use disturbances regarded as harmful or incompatible with the tourism industry.
4. Increased local commitment to solving land use conflicts that reduce wildlife revenues is demonstrating the profit incentive for communities to think through the various relationships between land uses and how they impact on their ADMADE revenues. The result is a low-cost, community-driven set of land use plans that have broad-base community support for managing resources for uses that can be controlled, regulated and more profitably managed. Land use planning as a process should be an annual event that reviews, assesses and modifies the existing plan. Experience has shown a high degree of success in overcoming a number of potentially difficult land uses that external authorities have had little success in controlling.
5. Increased capacity to collect data for making management decisions promotes community confidence in resource management and is the key to decentralizing management authority to the community. It is a skill that can be transferred to rural communities and applied to financial management, resource management and community development. The process is generally slow and training institutions, such as the College, must maintain a long-term support relationship to see that these skills continue to grow. The more advanced communities become in such skills, the more self-reliant they are in planning and solving problems and the more successful they will be in managing their natural resources. Many ADMADE communities are reaching levels of self-reliance in quota setting, budgeting management plans, analyzing data for interpreting wildlife population trends, and evaluating village scout performance. Such local management capacity was absent before CBNRM was introduced.

Conclusions

Zambia is building a long-term commitment to CBNRM through its ADMADE policy of engaging rural communities as the appropriate entity for managing and policing natural resources outside its national parks. It has a 10-year history of results that provide a strong foundation of technical expertise in promoting the development and future strengthening of this programme. Provided that the stakeholders of this programme engage in effective dialogue with ZAWA to review and assess the on-going efforts to improve the program, past and current lessons being learned to help overcome program challenges will become important building blocks for CBNRM growth in Zambia.